

new

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 765.8411/2 FOR #53

FROM Abyssinia (Southard) DATED Aug. 2, 1928
TO NAME 1-1127 G P O

REGARDING: rumored inclusion in draft treaty between Italy and Ethiopia of a concession for building motor road from Assab to near Addis Ababa. Practicability of such road is doubtful.

Wh

865a. 154844

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

August 2, 1928.

CONFIDENTIAL.

No. 50

The Honorable,
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my confidential despatch No. 50 of July 30th, 1928, on the subject of an Italo-Ethiopian treaty now under negotiation here.

Today I have heard confidentially and informally from an authoritative source that for reasons unknown to my informant the treaty is to be signed this week (perhaps tomorrow) by the Italian Minister in Addis Ababa. The Duke of the Abruzzi's visit in September will, in that event, become one merely of felicitation.

As indicated in Despatch No. 50 from this office I was informed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs himself that

the

the Duke was coming expressly to sign the treaty and convention. I have not since been able to see that officer of the government and do not know the reasons for the change. Perhaps even he does not know them. I suspect that the Prince Regent and local Italian Minister fear the rumored rising stores of objection among the "elder statesmen" of the Menelik régime to this seeming rapprochement with the Italians and have, for that reason, arranged this advancement of the signing date.

I am further informed that the Massowah free zone for Ethiopian use has been replaced by one at Asmab as the draft of the treaty now stands. There is said also to be included a concession for the building of a motor road from Asmab to a point about seventy miles north of Addis Ababa. Continuation to this capital may then be by railway, if desired.

In such a matter as this there is naturally a considerable amount of contradictory information in circulation. It is believed, however, that the above is reasonably accurate and final unless there should be another last minute change which no one can definitely estimate.

Perhaps the most outstanding of these latent developments in the draft treaty is the switch of the free zone from Massowah to Asmab. For reasons suggested in my despatch No. 80 the free zone at Massowah would possibly be more of a danger than an advantage to the Ethiopians. Asmab is an entirely different matter. The Ethiopian hope is, of course, to provide a way for the free importations of arms and munitions now difficult via Djibouti, but there is a rumor that

the new treaty contains some sort of a "joker" which will kill this seeming advantage. The text should very soon be available to this office and I shall then be able to submit more definite comment.

The possibility and practicability of building a road from Assab into Ethiopia are open to considerable doubt. For several years I have studied this area and on that basis express the opinion that there is little likelihood of finding available for a long while to come the millions required for the construction of such a road. On pages 14 and 51 of Special Consular Report No. 38, prepared by me on Eritrea and published in 1920 by the Government Printing Office at Washington, may be found references to Assab and its relation to Ethiopia. This report is on file in the Department, or if not readily located there is probably obtainable from the Superintendent of Documents.

Notwithstanding the improbability of the early construction of a road from Assab, if actually authorized by the treaty, the local French appear greatly chagrined over the turn of events. They are perhaps the most influential of any European power in Ethiopia, and may be in a position to create difficulties unless given a quid pro quo by the Addis Ababa government.

During the past few days there has also developed here the rumor that many of the older Ethiopian leaders are much vexed with what they now allege is the Prince Regent's precipitancy in the matter of this Italian treaty. The rumor continues that this vexation may possibly consolidate the

previously

previously scattered opposition in the country to the extent of a rising against the Prince Regent at the time of the great Meskal (sometimes called the Ethiopian New Year) festivities in September. This is a favorite time in Ethiopian history for the launching of revolutions or of lesser affairs of that tendency.

Another feature of the situation is that the League of Nations meeting to consider the membership status of Ethiopia is set for September. Difficulties are expected by the Ethiopians and it is locally commented that the signing of the treaty and convention may have been hurried up in order to enlist Italian support at Geneva.

Further report will be submitted as soon as the texts of the treaty and convention become available.

I have the honor to be, sir,

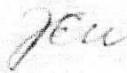
Your obedient servant,


ADDISON E. FAIRBANK.

In quintuplicate
to the Department.

AEC/JW

A true copy of
the signed origi-
nal.



DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 884.154/1 FOR #
FROM ADDISABABA (Southard) DATED Aug. 18, 1928
TO NAME I-1127 a.m.

REGARDING:

proposed new Ethiopian trade route, from south Eritrean port of Assab on the Red Sea to Dessie in north central Ethiopia, and thence to Addis Ababa, provided for by convention signed together with the Italo-Ethiopian treaty of friendship on August 2. The Italian-Ethiopian route may be either by motor road or railway.

Wh

865a. 15484 //2

VOLUNTARY REPORT.

CONFIDENTIAL.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSAB-DESSIE TRADE ROUTE.

Minister and Consul General.
(Addison E. Southard)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Date completed: Dec. 17, 1928.

Date mailed: Dec. 19, 1928.

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Reference is made to a report from this office entitled "A Proposed New Ethiopian Trade Route," mailed under date of August 20th, 1928.

There is attached herewith translation of an account recently published in THE ECONOMIC REVIEW of the Italian Colony of Eritrea which describes the topography and other features of the present caravan route from the port of Assab to Dessie in Ethiopia. This account gives a fairly accurate idea of the nature

nature of the country crossed. It smooths over some of the more unfavorable aspects as is natural with an account of Italian origin. In other respects the account is fairly accurate. No mention is, of course, made of the hostility of the desert tribes.

So far as can be learned in Addis Ababa no really tangible steps have yet been taken towards construction of the trade route in from Assab to Denie, as proposed by the Italo-Ethiopian Treaty and Convention signed here on August 2nd, 1936. Gosaip is to the effect that an energetic effort is being made to develop the interest of Italian capital on the basis of the probable existence of oil and other minerals along the route concerned. For a great number of years oil has been rumored to exist in the Danakil desert through which this trade route passes. There does not appear to be any definite information.

It is the understanding of this office that the Anglo-American Oil Company expedition which worked in Ethiopia during the winter of 1936-37 did not consider the Danakil desert territory as sufficiently promising to warrant an expedition there to prospect for oil. The work of this expedition was practically all done on the eastern

or

or Harrar side of the Franco-Ethiopian Railway.

Efforts were made to interest the Anglo-American geologist in penetrating the Dankali desert on the western side of the railway in the general direction of crossing the present Assab-Dessie caravan route. He did not go any appreciable distance.

Italian travelers and explorers know the desolate and desiccated area between Assab and Dessie better perhaps than any one else and the possibility always exists that they have definite information as to the mineral yielding possibilities of that territory. However, should such definite information exist it is kept strictly confidential by the Italian interests concerned.

In summary it is regretted that no more definite report can be made at this time concerning progress of the Assab-Dessie project. It may be said that there appears no more definite indication that the road will actually be built than existed at the time of the preparation of the original report which this contribution supplements.

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File No. 610.1
AES/aid.

S.D.

Translation.

THE CARAVAN ROAD FROM ASSAB TO DABO.

According to an account published in the ECONOMIC
ACTIVITY OF ETHIOPIA.

Caravans from Assab to Dabie now follow a general southwesterly direction in the Dankali plain, which extends in its greatest width from Assab to the Gulf of Tadjourah. The plain extends to the northern bank of the Hawash River. It strikes the rugged heights which break off from the group that extends to the East between the valleys of Hille and Borkena. These mountains here turn southeast and slope off 60 kilometers farther toward the coast and the lakes of the Hawash.

The caravans leaving the Hawash from South to West cross this plain. They gradually ascend the eastern plateaux of Olio crossing the torrential tributaries of the river. They join the chain of Ghedi at the foot of the range of mountains. These mountains run East and West, between the valleys of the Hille and Borkena. The route follows this course. It finally changes its direction eastward, climbing shoulder after shoulder up to Dabie. Farther along, the route crosses the mountain through the pass of Derek Arin, and descends to Densie on the Borkena River.

The first part of the caravan road, from Assab to a place called Tendao on the Hawash, is about 325 kilometers long, across the Dankali plain.

Tendao is 430 meters high. The highest known point between Assab and Tendao is Manda (510 meters), about 120 kilometers from Assab.

The peculiar characteristic of the conformation of the Dankali plain is a succession of generally argillaceous terraces with volcanic mixtures, which must have accompanied the formation of the great depression of the Red Sea and the upheaval of the highlands of Ethiopia and of Arabia.

These

These terraces are separated by rocky walls more or less undulated, often obstructed with loose stones which make the ascent difficult.

Camel transport is essential over the Assab-Hawash-Batie route owing to the lack of water and of sufficient grazing for miles. It is also too long a distance for miles, as it requires 20 to 23 days, with but few stopping places, and at these the pauses must be short. Resting places are naturally near wells.

The wells are (1) at Shible, on the upper course of the Arile torrent, which forms 27 kilometers south of Assab the oasis of Maghelia; (2) at Iela in Italian territory 56 kilometers from Assab; (3) at Prodoud in Ethiopian territory 150 kilometers from Assab; (4) at Alm 160 kilometers from Assab; (5) at Garraito 190 kilometers from Assab; (6) at Dobi 250 kilometers from Assab.

The route continues via the plain of Dardie, between the valley of Dobi and the Farrah. It leaves the Aussa in a southeastern direction. For this reason the caravan branch off from Gourat in the valley of the Dobi in order to join the road, above described, by Odwaito, at the northeastern angle of the Hawash, where the river takes the southeastern direction towards Assab.

II.

The second part of the caravan road from Tendao to the torrent of the Dadani-Yours, to the western limit of the Shati plain, and to the foot of the ascent of Batie is about 100 kilometers long. The altitude varies from 400 meters at Shamo to 700 meters at the torrent of Dadani-Yours.

The journey is made in five stages. Running water is found in the little river and wells at or near other torrents that are crossed.

III.

The third part of the route crosses the Ghedi plain of Batie to Fouch Mossie, a distance of about 110 kilometers entirely in the mountains, passing from the altitude of 700 meters at Dadani-Yours to that of 1670 meters at Batie. This part, about 50 kilometers long, is done in three stages.

At Batie the greater part of caravans leave the camels to take mules. This last journey of almost 64 kilometers has been recently improved by the Governor of Oollo and the distance may be travelled over easily in two or three stages although the ascents are rather steep in certain places.

Bessie

Dessie has an altitude of 2500 meters. The distance between Assab and Dessie is about 520 kilometers. The time usually required to cover this distance (camel caravans only) is from 45 to 50 days, including stops for rest.

The route is crossed by the trail from Deiloul to Aussa, in the valley of Dobi. Although the track that goes from the Deiloul valley, to Aussa is little frequented at present, it may be rejoined to Chibdo or at Dein in order to proceed to Aussa without lengthening the journey by more than two days. The latter section is hilly and difficult, but travelers have the option of taking the advantage of its grazing grounds and water. It is reported to in times of prolonged drought.

The track that leads from the Deil valley to the Hawash continues eastward to about 25 kilometers from Dein. A new track passes near the Dargi Lake and the Shiro Hill to reach Tadjourah, by a shorter road than that leading to Assab.

The difficult ascents may also be avoided by a deviation to the right of the Batic road from Hille. This road follows a short way inland, towards the Hawash and turning to the Wukera River on the territory of the tribe of Hille. It thus avoids the onerous Batic roads. The ascent thus becomes gentler rejoining the pass of track via on the northern side, via Combelchis.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 884.154/4 FOR #2077

FROM Italy (Kirk) DATED Jan. 9, 1929
TO NAME 1-1127 6 PM

REGARDING: building of Italian motor road between Dessie, in central Abyssinia, and the Eritrean port of Assab. Copy of itinerary map tracing approximate course, the entire construction to be assigned to Italians. No survey yet made.

Wh

884.154/2

ROME, January 9, 1929.

No. 2077.

CONFIDENTIAL

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

Referring to Mr. Tittmann's despatch No. 1971 of November 2nd and to the Department's Informal Comments for the period November 15 - December 15, 1928, with regard to the building of an Italian motor road between central Abyssinia and the Eritrean port of Assab, I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of an itinerary map recently released by the Ministry of Colonies which traces the approximate course of this road as planned from Assab to Dessié. In conversation with a member of the Embassy's staff Signor Astuto, Director General of Political Affairs at the Ministry of Colonies, stated that according to the original proposal, Italy was to have built the road from Assab to the Abyssinian

frontier

frontier and that Abyssinia was to have continued it from the frontier to Dessié. Arrangements were now being made, however, whereby the construction of the entire road would be assigned to the Italians, the Abyssinians paying for their stretch or for about four-fifths of the entire road. Signor Astuto, while admitting that the economic possibilities of the country tapped by the road were as yet unknown, seemed to be of the opinion that the fact that the road was there would in itself create enough traffic eventually to make the enterprise profitable. He seemed to be much impressed by the recent increase in the traffic of the Addis Abeba - Djibouti Railroad and said that he believed that this railroad was now actually making money. In conclusion Signor Astuto stated that the road had not yet been surveyed - in fact, only a handful of white men had ever been over the itinerary which necessitated travel by camel and mule; that the itinerary as shown on the enclosed map was by no means final; and that he did not believe the project would interest American road construction companies, since the building of a hard surfaced, modern road was not contemplated in the plans.

In the opinion of Colonel Nation, the British Military Attaché in Rome, who has just returned from an extended tour in Abyssinia, whether or not the road is to be constructed at all depends upon the economic possibilities, as yet unknown, of northern Abyssinia, since the road would draw the greater part of its traffic from this region. For the purpose of ascertaining the resources of northern Abyssinia, an expedition of Italian engineers headed by Baron Franchetti started

out

out the first days of last December and, according to Colonel Nation, it was therefore logical to suppose that no serious work would be started on the project until Baron Franchetti's findings were submitted to the authorities. Colonel Nation added that while Negus Taffari seems to be an enthusiastic supporter of the project, the Empress, who is still presumably under French influence, has not yet been persuaded to give her consent to the road's construction.

A recent article in the CORRIERE DELLA SERA denies that the motor road and the Free Zone at Assab would compete seriously with the French railroad and the Port of Djibouti, because the former would serve principally a region of northern Abyssinia that is at the present time paralyzed on account of the lack of communications. In other words, with Djibouti and Assab, Ethiopia would breathe with two lungs instead of with one as she is doing at present. The projected route has been used so far by caravans only and a thorough knowledge of the terrain is indispensable before the type of engineering works that will be necessary in its construction can be decided upon. The CORRIERE DELLA SERA estimates the cost at from 12 to 15 millions of lire, but adds that Ethiopia is making such strides economically that there is no doubt that "whoever furthers this economic development will be the first to benefit from it".

The Italian press is careful not to express undue optimism and the writers on the subject do not hesitate to admit that the "if" looms large. In the enclosed article, for instance, in LA TRIBUNA of December 30th, General Pantano, who

is familiar with conditions in East Africa, states that it is certain that there would be enough traffic for the road, but in the next breath he gives warning that the cost of upkeep would make heavy inroads upon the financial returns. "From an economic point of view," he concludes, "the undertaking offers great possibilities, but only if well managed."

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Alexander Kirk,
Charge d'Affaires ad interim.

Enclosures:

Map;
Article from LA TRIBUNE (copy and translation).

Copy to S.I.C., Paris, and
to Addis Ababa.

HMT/ps

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- "Noi e il Mondo,"

N. 310

Nuovi orizzonti per il commercio italo-etiopico



Per l'accordo fra l'Italia e l'Abyssinia del quale la stampa ha largamente discusso nello scorso mese, la prima ha concesso all'altra una zona franca in Assab realizzando alfine l'aspirazione vivissima di tutti i Re d'Etiopia ad uno sbocco al mare.

La concessione di detta zona rimarrebbe una formula cortese se non si pensasse a congiungere Assab con l'altipiano etiopico a mezzo di strada che permetta alle merci abissine di arrivare sollecitamente dall'interno al Mar Rosso. Per ciò il trattato di cui sopra stabilisce la costruzione di una camionabile fra Assab e il più vicino centro commerciale e politico dell'Impero, Dessié; camionabile destinata a dar vita ai languenti commerci del pa-

Dessié-Assab; così che il movimento commerciale di questo porto in tre anni — dal '22 al '25 — è salito da L. 2.047.000 a 27.500.000.

Il commercio dell'Etiopia centrale è contenuto oggi in modestissimo sviluppo dalle difficoltà logistiche che incontra in ogni direzione; ma diventerà cospicuo non appena godrà del potente ausilio della camionabile Dessié-Assab.

Si tratta di quattro milioni di abitanti che han bisogno di cotonate, strumenti rurali, oggetti domestici di ogni genere, manufatti, zucchero, sale, petrolio, sapone e che possono dare in cambio grandi quantità di bestiame, pelli, caffè, cera, miele, granaglie, burro, legumi; si tratta di tutta o quasi la metà orientale del grandioso bacino del lago Tzana che include le va-

co al mare.

La concessione di detta zona rimarrebbe una formula cortese se non si pensasse a congiungere Assab con l'altipiano etiopico a mezzo di strada che permetta alle merci abissine di arrivare sollecitamente dall'interno al Mar Rosso. Per ciò il trattato di cui sopra stabilisce la costruzione di una camionabile fra Assab e il più vicino centro commerciale e politico dell'Impero, Dessiè; camionabile destinata a dar vita ai languenti commerci del paese in cui sbocca.

La cosa è chiara; le carovane impiegano 40 giorni, se di cammelli, e da 20 a 25 se di muletti, per scendere al mare, mentre la ferrovia Addis-Abeba-Gibuti ne impiega tre; così che i commercianti di Dessiè hanno oggi la convenienza di perdere dieci e persino venti giornate di carovana per trasportare le merci alla testa della ferrovia suddetta, anziché inviarle al mare per la via più breve e diretta, ma non ancora aperta ai mezzi meccanici.

L'accordo italo-etiopico fa obbligo alle parti contraenti di costruire il tratto della strada che si svolge nel rispettivo territorio. E' naturale e logico pensare che per la costruzione della sua parte — di gran lunga la maggiore — Negus Tafari ricorrerà ad una società italo-etiopica mancando in Abissinia uomini e mezzi tecnici.

L'importanza politica di tutto questo: zona franca, strada da Assab-Dessiè e assunzione da parte d'imprese italo-etiopiche dei lavori inerenti all'apertura del nuovo sbocco, è tanto evidente che non perderò tempo a dimostrarla; notando solo come la Nazione che meno pareva destinata a stringere amicizia con l'Etiopia perchè l'unica che l'abbia combattuta con le armi, è oggi in condizione di renderle il più gradito servizio e di stringere con essa vincoli assai più stretti ed intimi che non siano quelli scritti sui trattati.

la ferrovia Gibuti-Adis Abeba, lunga 800 km.

I lavori per la costruzione della camionabile saranno certamente notevoli ma, per il momento almeno, credo siano da escludere i ponti sostituendoli con cunettoni sul fondo dei torrenti; sia perchè il traffico dell'altipiano si arresta completamente durante la stagione delle pioggie e i ponti sarebbero inutili,

sia perchè i torrenti in piena si allargano talmente che anche i ponti rimarrebbero isolati in mezzo all'inondazione, pur ammettendo resistessero all'impeto delle acque.

Tenuto conto dunque che le maggiori opere sono per ora sconsigliabili e che il fondo della strada è

utilizzabile in alcuni tratti così com'è per natura, si può calcolare che il costo totale dei 550 km. ci agirerà fra i 15 e 20 milioni.

Le spese di esercizio saranno forti; anzitutto per tre mesi dell'anno, durante il periodo più intenso delle pioggie sull'altipiano, ogni traffico è sospeso e perciò materiale e personale restano inutilizzati; poi alla fine della stagione piovosa occorreranno grosse riparazioni alla strada; il personale dovrà essere scelto e numeroso; il clima di Assab e del basso piano guasta materiale e uomini.

In compenso si può far sicuro calcolo sopra buona attività della nuova arteria; il traffico e i conseguenti redditi saranno pronti ad apercervi.

Come ho detto, notevole parte del movimento globale del commercio etiopico che defluisce a Massaua a nord e a Gibuti a sud, avrà convenienza a dirigersi al mare ad oriente per la via più diretta.

Qualche carovana comincia già ad avviarsi nonostante l'enorme costo dei trasporti. Oggi un quintale di merci fra Assab e Dessié costa, trasportato a cammello, quasi 100 lire; è evidente che i camions darebbero notevolissimo vantaggio.

In totale il movimento commerciale si può ritenere assicurato e redditizio; ma bisogna astenersi da ogni esagerazione ottimistica perché i frequenti lavori di riparazione alla strada, la manutenzione diligente e costosa del materiale, il personale numeroso e scelto incideranno profondamente sul reddito.

Dal lato economico l'impresa offre dunque lusinghiere prospettive ma soltanto a patto di buona sistemazione e di vigile amministrazione.

La sicurezza del traffico si può ritenere sarà completa. Certamente la nuova arteria disturberà in principio alcuni interessi a cominciare da quelli dei cammellieri; darà noia a speciali traffici di alcuni capi; diminuirà i proventi doganali di altri; ma il Negus Tafari nel suo equilibratissimo senso di governo troverà il modo per compensare le eventuali loro perdite e per non suscitar nemici all'impresa ch'egli patrocinerà con tutto ardore. Su ciò nessun dubbio.

IN IV

In un articolo con questo titolo, Arnaldo

« Vi è qualche politica rurale dal Governo simismo il trionfale del semplicismo urbanati, che re-in famiglia per farli rientrare da cui, verso le città, tener conto d'è invece tutta dotilesca e di vita moderna la politica rurale vita civile. Il Fascismo vede il corso dell'attivismo sono elezioni integratori: bisogna necessario com-

L'articolo è delle grandi eistiche città italiane

« I nostri PdA fare se vogliano quartieri, il centro, orientandosi verso attività palestre, opere degne di moderni. Solo sicuramente la prima e la politica treno elevare nazione armoniosamente apparirà gli altri popoli

Poiché troppo questo argomento della ruralizzazione bugliarsi, è bene tanto vengano quelle citate.

Dell'on. Carlo S

polo Toscano u

colo a proposito di Balilla, la quale

essere di stile?

Ne riprendiamo

« Chi saranno Dato che le istituzioni, definitivamente di domani sono loro che oggi sono disti. Quindi, esiste una costruita, immagine e sono

Fascista ugualmente quindi, santi di busti di pensiero nella morale principali in ogni ogni impresa: è chiaro.

I balli, le feste, lo sport è uno svago che è vertimenti multi-intesi piuttosto che nella stessa inserita una ginnastica di tempo indispensabile alla formazione dei sono costituire tutti gli educatori fascisti.

Bisogna che vi sia un concreto, di vera educazione.

Bisogna che quel sentimento religioso che noi vogliamo e dobbiamo instillare nell'animo del fanciullo venga dilatato dal campo della religione vera e propria a tutta quanta la vita.

La sicurezza del traffico si può ritenere sarà completa. Certamente la nuova arteria disturberà in principio alcuni interessi a cominciare da quelli dei cammellieri; darà noia a speciali traffici di alcuni capi; diminuirà i proventi doganali di altri; ma il Negus Tafari nel suo equilibratissimo senso di governo troverà il modo per compensare le eventuali loro perdite e per non suscitar nemici all'impresa ch'egli patrocinerà con tutto ardore. Su ciò nessun dubbio.

Dal momento che il Re d'Abissinia ha deciso che la camionabile sia fatta, ogni difficoltà sarà da lui affrontata e appianata; la fermezza di cui è dotato, il suo tatto politico, i mezzi di cui dispone danno pieno affidamento di piena tranquillità durante i lavori e durante l'esercizio della strada.

Tuttavia sarà utile, necessario anzi, evitare incidenti di qualsiasi genere, attriti, cagioni di malcontento; e a tale scopo bisognerà dare speciali istruzioni al personale e sarà bene che questo, oltre a un capo tecnico abbia anche un capo direi quasi politico: uomo sensato, energico, pratico di luoghi, persone, costumi e psicologia delle popolazioni e dei capi incaricati di preparare prima i diversi ambienti e di appianare poi le inevitabili difficoltà e di attutire eventuali momentanei urti che si verificassero durante il lavoro.

Solo, in tal modo, a mio avviso, l'importante impresa italo-etiopica procederà serena ed indisturbata attraverso le deserte plaghe bagnate dal sangue delle missioni Bianchi, Giulietti, Porro, e consacrando ad opera di alta civiltà darà significato e valore e compenso al sacrificio di quei nostri pionieri.

Ed è certo significativo che a tale opera si apprestino amichevolmente due popoli che Adua pareva avesse per sempre divisi.

Gen. GHERARDO PANTANO

La morte di un collega

NAPOLI, 29. — Ieri notte si è spento nella nostra città il collega prof. Armando Pappalardo.

Uomo di vasta e profonda cultura il Pappalardo iniziò la sua carriera giornalistica in età giovanissima e quale redattore del *Corriere di Napoli*.

Fu cronista del *Don Marzio* e del *Giorno* nonché assiduo ed apprezzato collaboratore di molti altri quotidiani e riviste, e insegnante di belle lettere nell'Istituto industriale.

Asfissiato dall'acido carbonico

FIRENZE, 29. — Si ha da Figline Valdarno che Pietro Lazzerini, abitante nel viale Vittorio Locchi, per riscaldare la propria camera aveva acceso del carbone in un braciere, collocandolo nel mezzo della stanza. La sera il Lazzerini si coricava insieme ai figli Mario e Dante. Durante la notte venivano presi da asfissia, prodotta dall'acido carbonico. Mario moriva e gli altri due sono stati ricoverati all'ospedale Serristori.

Audace furto a Firenze

nei locali della tesoreria provinciale

FIRENZE, 29. — Il colonnello in congedo, Antonio Bacocchi, mentre si trovava nei locali della Tesoreria Provinciale in via dell'Orluolo, per effettuare una riscossione, veniva decisamente derubato ad opera di uno sconosciuto di una busta che teneva in tasca, contenente titoli per L. 12 mila.

TRANSLATION

NEW HORIZONS FOR ITALO-ETHIOPIAN COMMERCE

Today the commercial channels of the vast Ethiopian Empire are three, of which two very important ones open on the sea at Massua and Djibouti. The other, much less important on account of the distance that must be travelled, extends westward to the Nile Valley. In general, therefore, it may be said that Massua is the port of Northern Abyssinia in the same way as Djibouti is the port of Southern Abyssinia.

But the country is so extensive that Central Abyssinia, too far distant from the heads of the Addis Abeba-Djibouti and the Assmara-Massua railroads, benefits very little from either one of these routes, and it is only with difficulty that a small amount of its products are transported this way. So true is this that hardly had the Danakil district been rendered safe for travel and friendly relations established between our Commissary in Assab and the chiefs of the interior, than a portion of this Central Abyssinian trade -- in spite of the

attraction

attraction exerted by the Djibouti Railroad -- returned to the natural outlet and again followed the Dessié-Assab caravan line. Thus it was that the commercial activity of the port of Assab increased in three years -- from 1922 to 1925 -- from 2,047,000 to 27,500,000 lire.

The trade of Central Abyssinia is of very modest proportions today on account of the difficulties which it encounters in every direction; but it will become important as soon as it benefits from the great assistance afforded by the Dessié-Assab automobile road.

Here is a question of 4,000,000 inhabitants who are in need of clothing, farming implements, domestic articles of all kinds, manufactured goods, sugar, salt, petroleum, and soap, and which are able to give in exchange large quantities of cattle, skins, coffee, honey, wax, grains, butter and vegetables; it involves almost the entire western half of the great basin of Lake Tana which includes the vast regions of Wollo-Galla, Jeggiu, Lasta, Beghemeder, Northern and Eastern Goggiam, and of Norro Jele; in other words, the most populated, healthiest, and richest region of the whole of Abyssinia. In all probability it is also rich in minerals.

Today the commercial activity of Djibouti amounts to more than a billion lire while that of Massaua reaches 300,000,000. In a few years these figures certainly will be much greater because, under the impulse of an intelligent and energetic chief such as Negus Tafari, Abyssinia will make rapid strides along the road of progress and her requirements are bound to increase as a result.

But even though there should be no increase in Abyssinia's

trade,

trade, the construction of the automobile road from Assab to Dassie would nevertheless be fully justified by the estimate -- neither exaggerated nor optimistic -- that about one-quarter of this trade would of itself flow eastward as soon as a short and an economic route permitted the merchants to save the expense and time necessary for the long stretch from north to south.

Will the expenses of this construction be compensated?

Will the automobile road which is going to be so advantageous to Ethiopian commerce be profitable for the company which is going to undertake the work?

An exhaustive reply can be had from the technicians who are studying the problem on the premises and they will be in a position to assert exactly how much the road will cost, because it is they who will determine precisely its length and the necessary work connected with it. But certain data is already available -- enough to make a few approximate calculations.

The Aussa road, travelled by Lieut. Giannini and Lieut. Marazzani who left a precious account of their itinerary, by Engineer Lega, by Brielli, and by others, was studied with great interest by Colonel Annaratone, who was the first to examine the problem with a complete vision of its significance in the same way that it is being discussed today.

He divides the road in five parts, according to the valleys through which it passes: 1. Assab-Ela - 58.200 kms. 2. Ela-Mauda Hassen Uacari - 90 kms. 3. Hassen Uacari-Valle of Jemima-Dobi-Cusrat - 140 kms. 4. Cusrat-Batié - 180 kms. 5. Batié-Dassie - 60 kms.

There are altogether 528 kms. which, under the most pessimistic hypothesis, will total 550 kms. through the transformation

transformation of the camel road into an automobile road. It is also possible that there may be a reduction in these figures.

We have, therefore, a route that is notably shorter than the railroad line from Djibouti to Addis-Ababa, which is 800 kms. long.

The work on the construction of the automobile road will certainly be considerable, but for the moment at least I believe that it will not be necessary to build bridges, drainage canals being sufficient, both because the traffic on the plateau completely ceases during the rainy season making the bridges useless, and because, when the rivers rise, they overflow on all sides to such an extent that the bridges themselves would be isolated even though they would be able to withstand the force of the flood waters.

Bearing in mind, therefore, that it would be unwise to undertake the building of important constructions for the moment, and that the natural surface of the road can be used in some sections, the total cost of the 550 kms. can be calculated between 15 and 20 millions.

The cost of upkeep will be great. First of all for three months of the year, during the period of intense rainfall on the plateau, all traffic is suspended and therefore material and personnel must be idle. Then, at the end of the rainy season, a great deal of road repair would be necessary. The personnel should be carefully chosen and numerous. The climate of Assab and of the lower plain ruins both material and men.

On the other hand, it is possible to say for certain that the business of the new artery will be brisk. The traffic and the consequent returns will be immediate.

As I have said, an important part of the total commercial activity of Ethiopia, which finds its outlet at present at Massua on the north and at Djibouti at the south, will find it more convenient to reach the sea toward the east by the most direct route.

A few caravans are already beginning to follow this line in spite of the enormous cost of transportation. Today a quintal of merchandise between Assab and Dassie costs when transported by camel about 100 lire. It is evident that the use of trucks would be able to afford most important advantages.

To sum up, the commercial traffic can be considered assured and profitable. But it is necessary to refrain from too much optimistic exaggeration, because the frequent repairs to the road, the continual upkeep and the cost of material, and the numerous and carefully chosen personnel, will make heavy inroads into the financial returns. From an economic point of view, therefore, the undertaking offers great possibilities but only if well managed.

The use of the road, of course, must be made safe. Certainly the new artery will first of all clash with certain interests beginning with the camel owners; it will annoy certain chiefs who enjoy revenues from private trade of their own; and it will decrease the customs revenues of others. But Negus Tafari, on account of his well-balanced governing sense, will find a way to compensate the eventual losses of these and to avoid making enemies of the undertaking that he himself is furthering with great ardour. Regarding this there is no doubt.

From the moment that the King of Abyssinia decided that the automobile road was to be constructed, he determined that every difficulty should be faced and smoothed out by him. The firmness with which he is endowed, his political tact, the means which he has at his disposal, make one confident that the work will be accomplished and the road administered under peaceful conditions.

However, it will be useful and even obligatory to avoid incidents of any kind, and to this end it will be necessary to give special instructions to the personnel. It would be a good idea if these, in addition to a technical chief, could have a sort of political chief, a sensible, energetic man with a knowledge of the region, of the personalities, of the customs and psychology of the populations. Especially he should know how to handle the tribal chiefs who must first prepare the various regions for the enterprise, and later must smooth out the inevitable difficulties and disputes which will arise from time to time while the work is progressing.

In my opinion, in this way only will the important Italo-thiopian undertaking proceed smoothly and serenely across the deserted regions bathed with the blood of the Bianchi, Giulietti, Porro missions, and only by consecrating the undertaking to the progress of civilization can it mean something worth while and compensate for the sacrifices of these pioneers of ours.

And it is certainly significant that two peoples which Adowa appeared to have divided forever should both lend themselves in a friendly manner to this work.

Gen. GHERARDO PANTANO.

Central File: Decimal File 865A.154, Internal Affairs Of States, Public Works., Eritrea, Roads. Streets. Highways. Paving., August 2, 1928. 2 Aug. 1928. MS European Colonialism in the Early 20th Century.
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